



Pastor Doug Wilson · BETHANY - A PLACE OF NEW BEGINNINGS
EASTER SUNDAY! · April 4, 2021

THREE PEOPLE TRANSFORMED BY THE RESURRECTED JESUS

1. _____: someone at peace in the face of _____ & violence.

ACTS 6:3-15 (TNIV)

³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be **FULL OF THE SPIRIT AND WISDOM.** ⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man **FULL OF FAITH AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

⁸ Now Stephen, a man **FULL OF GOD'S GRACE AND POWER**, performed great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) — Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia — who began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰ But **they could not stand up against THE WISDOM THE SPIRIT GAVE HIM AS HE SPOKE.**

¹¹ Then they **secretly persuaded** some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."

¹² So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. ¹³ They produced **false witnesses**, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. ¹⁴ For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

¹⁵ All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and **they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.**

ACTS 7:51-60 (TNIV)

⁵¹ "You **stiff-necked** people! Your **hearts** and **ears** are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: **YOU ALWAYS RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT!** ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not **persecute**? They even **killed** those who predicted the coming of **THE RIGHTEOUS ONE.** **And now you have betrayed and murdered him** — ⁵³ you who have **received** the law that was given through angels but have not **obeyed** it."

⁵⁴ When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, **FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.** ⁵⁶ "LOOK," he said, "I see **heaven open** and **THE SON OF MAN standing at the right hand of God.**"

⁵⁷ At this **they covered their ears** and, **yelling at the top of their voices**, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, **the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.**

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Q1 _____ your death, will people remember you as having been:

- full of the _____ (v. 3)
- full of _____
- full of _____ (v. 5)
- full of the Holy _____ (again)
- full of God's _____ (v. 8)
- full of _____
- full of Spirit-given _____ (v. 10)
- full of the Holy _____ (a third time!) (v. 55)

Q2 _____ your death, will you be:

- _____ of the presence of the Risen Jesus? (vv. 55-56)
- dying as Jesus did, _____ your spirit to God? (v. 59; Luke 23:46)
- like Jesus, _____ those who wounded you? (v. 60; Luke 23:34)

2. _____: someone given a 180° _____ of _____.

ACTS 8:1-3 (TNIV)

¹ And Saul approved of their killing him.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ² Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³ **But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.**

ACTS 9:1-31 (TNIV)

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found *any* there who belonged to the Way, **whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.**

³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly **A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN** flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard **A VOICE** say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I AM JESUS, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; **they heard the sound but did not see anyone.** ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.

⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

3. _____ : someone who helps an _____ become a _____.

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. **THE LORD CALLED TO HIM IN A VISION,** "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for **he is praying.** ¹² **In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."**

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, **"I have heard many reports about this man & all the harm he has done to your people in Jerusalem."** ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to **arrest all who call on YOUR NAME."**

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, **"GO! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim MY NAME to the Gentiles and their kings** and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ **I will show him how much he must suffer for MY NAME."**

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. **Placing his hands on Saul,** he said, **"BROTHER Saul, THE LORD — JESUS, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again AND BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT."** ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Q1 Like Ananias, are your ears _____ to God's voice? If He spoke, would you notice?

Q2 Like Ananias, is your heart open to God _____ your opinion of someone?

Q3 Like Ananias, are you willing to _____ someone you _____?

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. ²⁰ **At once he began to preach in the synagogues that JESUS is THE SON OF GOD.** ²¹ All those who heard him were astonished and asked, **"Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on THIS NAME?** And hasn't he come here to **take them as prisoners** to the chief priests?" ²² Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus **by proving that JESUS is THE MESSIAH.**

²³ After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, **but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.** ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey **HAD SEEN THE LORD** and that **THE LORD HAD SPOKEN TO HIM,** and how in Damascus **he had preached fearlessly IN THE NAME OF JESUS.** ²⁸ So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, **speaking boldly IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.** ²⁹ He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, **but they tried to kill him.** ³⁰ When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

³¹ Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

ACTS 26 (THE MESSAGE)

¹⁵ "I said, 'Who are you, Master?' "The voice answered, 'I am Jesus, the One you're hunting down like an animal. ¹⁶ But now, up on your feet — **I have a job for you.** I've **handpicked** you to be a SERVANT and WITNESS *to what's happened today,* and *to what I am going to show you.*

¹⁷ **"I'm sending you off to open the eyes of the outsiders so they can see the difference between dark and light, and choose light, see the difference between Satan and God, and choose God.**

**I'm sending you off to present my offer of sins forgiven,
and a place in the family,
inviting them into the company of those
who begin real living by believing in me.'**

Q1 Are you interested in what Paul gave his life to _____?

Q2 Like Paul, would you like God to _____ your character?

Q3 Are you ready to choose _____ over dark . . . and _____ over evil?

Q4 Do you want your _____ forgiven? And a _____ in God's family?

Q5 Are you ready to begin real living by _____ in the Crucified & Risen Jesus?